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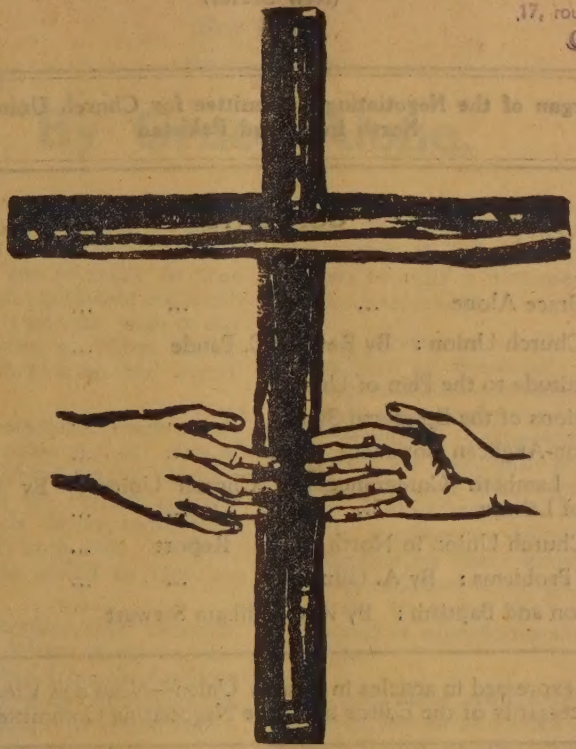

NEWS AND VIEWS

FEBRUARY 1959

Grappling with the Critics!

CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

Vol. 4 | Organ of the Negotiating Committee for Church Union in North India and Pakistan | No. 1

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Opinions expressed in articles in *Church Union—News and Views* are those of the writers and not necessarily of the Editor or of the Negotiating Committee.

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Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

By Grace Alone.

IN recent months, the negotiating churches have been receiving friendly advice about the Plan of Union from churches overseas with which they are severally in close fraternal relations. Such comments are much to be welcomed, for it is not the wish of any of the negotiating bodies to adopt a Plan which would alienate them from the world-wide Church.

Even so, as these comments reach us, we cannot but feel that some of them may be based, less on an understanding of the *Plan* in its present form than on certain assumptions which our friends derive more from their own situation than from ours, or from a stage in the discussions which in fact has been left behind.

This caution is necessary, for example, regarding the renewed debate on the Unification of the Ministry. Here, from the Anglican side, we have the following interpretation given by the Bishops assembled at Lambeth:

> "...it is clearly stated that the intention of the rite is that all may receive through all, whatever each has to contribute and whatever each may need of the fullness of Christ's grace, commission, and authority for the performance of his proper office in the Church Universal...From the Anglican point of view, therefore, the rite is intended to convey everything of value in the Anglican ministry, including the tradition of episcopal ordination..."

If this interpretation were correct, must we not have sympathy with the criticism made by Dr. Mascall, to which the Bishop of Lahore refers in his article on another page of this issue, that the phrase "the tradition of episcopal ordination" is ambiguous? Does it, in fact, mean "episcopal ordination" and if it does, why not say so?

On the other hand, from a non-episcopal church, it is not surprising that a similar interpretation has led them to send to their partners in India a statement containing the following sentences:

> "...Presbyterians readily acknowledge the validity of Episcopal ordination, and should always welcome a similar forthright acknowledgement of the validity of Presbyterial ordination from Churches which are episcopally governed. Limited or restricted acknowledgement however is another matter; and any proposed rite or ceremony which would carry the implication that something further is required from Presbyterian ministers in order to make their ordination valid would be superfluous and indeed unthinkable."

For both these groups of friends and for ourselves, lest we be misled by their implicit or explicit interpretation of what is proposed, it seems right to reprint once more what actually is set out in the Third Edition of the *Plan of Union*. The whole section (II. VII) should be studied, but it contains these words:

> "11.....In this act they seek the grace of God for the wider and more effectual fulfilment of their ministry.
>
> 12...the existing bishops and representative presbyters:.....shall accept through the laying-on of hands of the persons duly authorized by the united Church the additional authority that they lacked in separation...
>
> 13...It is not re-ordination; nor is it presumed to bestow again the grace, gifts, character or authority that have already been bestowed upon them.

14...The laying on of hands is adopted as a scriptural and traditional symbol of the bestowing of spiritual gifts by God; and the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying-on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fullness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India/Pakistan.

15. In particular they believe that God will assuredly so answer their prayers that any difference between ministers not hitherto episcopally ordained and those already so ordained will be thus transcended, and that by such transcending of this and other differences, as they are known to God Himself, the Church of North India/Pakistan will receive from Him at the outset a ministry fully and without exception accredited in the eyes of all its members, and, so far as may be, of the Church throughout the world."

This is the statement of intention contained in the plan. As far as the character of the unified ministry of the united Church is concerned, surely the last paragraph quoted is explicit enough. Nevertheless, with all respect to our episcopalian advisers, we must point out that the intention is *not* phrased in the words by which Lambeth has interpreted it. It is so phrased as to signify a common turning to God that we may receive *from Him* whatever of the fullness of Christ's grace, etc., we may need, and the officiating ministers are those "duly authorized by the united Church".

At the same time, with equal respect to our Presbyterian advisers, we must point out that there is no word here which implies that "something further is required from Presbyterian ministers," which is not proposed in identical language for all. We are aware of the fact that in our divided churches there are some who are unable to recognise the equal validity of different ministries. This is indeed one of our points of difference. But we do claim that, in this proposed rite or ceremony, as set out in the Third Edition of the Plan, there is nothing discriminatory. The proposal is that all alike submit to the mercy of God, that of His grace He may endow all the ministers for their task in the days ahead.

The fact is that the Negotiating Committee has not put forward a Plan which implies a judgement on the relative validity of ministries, either positively or negatively. We are not uniting on the basis of a claim of correctness in our orders, however justified we might think such a claim to be. That basis would not only be precarious, but it would imply a flagrant ignoring of the Lord's reminder that when we have done all things we are still unprofitable servants, wholly dependent on His mercy. Where is boasting? It is excluded. As Bishop Newbigin has pointed out in various writings, it is becomes a forgiven sinner to claim that the sins he has committed were less damaging than those of another forgiven sinner. We come together before God, not in the proud assurance of what we have done, but in humble penitence, dependent on His mercy. Conscious of His goodness to us in the past and seeking to remain faithful to what we believe to be His will, as we look to our brethren, we do not presume to call common what He has been pleased to accept. It is sufficient that we cast ourselves upon His grace alone.

Church Union—News and Views

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure, 1958

Receipts			Expenditure		
Balance in hand 1st Jan.	...	506.87	Press	...	869.
Subscriptions	...	826.68	Postage	...	18.
			Paper & stencil	...	1.
			Bank charges	...	5.
			Balance in hand	...	438.
		1333.55			1333.

Checked and found correct
A. M. Barnabas.

W. M. Ryburn
Manager.

Preparation For Church Union.

Rev. C. C. Pande

THE uniting churches have to prepare with all earnestness each member of the uniting churches to have intelligent information and all the available knowledge on the Plan of Church Union for North India/Pakistan. In this effort, the first step must be that every presbyter is well acquainted with the Plan. Each must know what main contribution his own church is bringing into the union, and what other heritage the uniting churches are going to inherit in the Church of North India/Pakistan.

The essentials which had enriched each church in our separation will be in the united church to make a church, which will bring the best of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism or Congregationalism.

Why Union ?

1. The second step is to prepare each congregation. The question that comes from the members is why should we unite ?

(a) We should unite, because " We, being many, are one body in Christ." We are uniting, not in any fear of persecution or to gain any political advantage in any form. We must prepare to unite to witness to our unity in the Lord of Life. The churches must come together in an organic union to witness to the faith that the Church had from the time of the apostles. St. Paul said, For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ."

This conception of the Church and of being a member of the Church, must be the main challenge to all our members. In each church, before the inauguration of Union, an all-out effort has to be made to make each member of the church conscious of his relationship and his personal union with our Saviour.

" So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of one another's character." (Rom. 14-10 Phillips)

No church can wait in hope that we shall prepare the memberships after union. Two invalids or seven invalids will not make a strong witnessing body. If we are uniting to witness to our unity in Christ, then we must in the first place be deeply rooted in the life of our redeeming Lord.

(b) The spiritual level of the Church will not be improved by union. There must be a well planned effort before union " to welcome a man whose faith is weak " within the Church. " And as one man you will sing from the heart the praises of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So open your hearts to one another as Christ has opened His heart to you, and God will be glorified. " (Rom. 14 : 1, 15 : 7–Phillips)

The United Church will witness to the power of the living Christ in the life of all its members in one Church.

The preparation in the Church to make every member conscious of his union with Christ and with one another will surely arouse in the minds of each member a willing dependence on God.

Economic Strength

2. The present economic dependence of the uniting churches on overseas help is not due to the low economic condition of the Church members in India or Pakistan. It is due to the main fact that the majority of our Church members have not the faith that David had, that " both riches and honour come of Thee ", " for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

In each Church, efforts should be made, that each of our members know that the highest privilege, given only to men and the angels, is to offer to God what God has given to him for His glory.

(a) Every offering to God must be a worthy giving.

Malachi had said, " A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master ; if then I be a father, where is mine honour ? " " And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? " The Church members must know that they are the Holy Priesthood. They must know that it is a God-given

privilege to give to God. Each member must learn to bring with humility his worthy offerings to God.

(b) Even a casual survey of giving in the Church will reveal that most of the members at a lower economic level give more in proportion to what a man with a higher income gives for God's work. Also a proportion in every congregation take no interest in the activities of the Church at all.

The Call to Witness

We have a great task and a most important function within each congregation to make every Christian a living witness in the life of the Church activities. The financial dependence of many of the congregations is not only due to the low economic condition of the members but to some extent is due to the lack of a conception that "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."

(c) We must prepare in each congregation to raise more for God's work. "The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." This is not applicable only to the overseas churches. Some of the local congregations can raise enough for the local needs and also spare for the weaker rural congregations. Also we must prepare our members to give more worthily.

(d) In preparing for Church Union, we must not think that everything will be better when we are united. Several dependent churches will not make one strong autonomous Church. The giving in each congregation will improve as we draw every member into a living fellowship with one Lord. When the total membership will be a worshipping community we shall have a giving and witnessing community.

Giving must be broad-based, through the Church offerings, offerings from families, offerings by children. Offerings to God must always be worthy. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." We must in Church make every member a cheerful giver.

The Church and the World

4. The uniting churches were set up by missionaries from overseas. They gave the best and established the churches. We are sorry that we are divided, but we have to recognise that they had given their best and done what was possible when the unitin churches were brought into being. They influenced the life of the country through the service, they carried the torch of light through the spread of education and the ministry of healing.

In free India our country is marching onwards. Education and medical relief have spread widely in the last eleven years.

Is the Church in each local situation, both in the urban and in the rural set-up, influencing the country's progress? Are we meeting the need of the country? Have we been able to bring an impact on the life of our country in the way the missionaries did in the past?

The uniting churches should prepare each member to be in the forefront in Christian discipleship. The common members also should be able to witness in life, discipline, sacrifice, humility, honesty and the dignity of labour. The missionary spirit of service and devotion to all good work must not remain as a historic heritage of the Christian Church. It should be a reality in the life of the Christians in each congregation. In all the activities run by the Church, our aim should be the redemption of man's whole life.

I appeal to all the uniting churches to make plans and to prepare from now on. May the inauguration of the seven uniting churches bring together the healthy, strong and disciplined partners to witness in India to the visible body of our Loving Saviour of mankind.

The Anglican Attitude to the Plan of Union

(a) Decisions of the Episcopal Synod of the C. I. P. B. C.

THE following are decisions taken by the Anglican Episcopal Synod at its meetings held in Allahabad from ecember 8 to 18, 1958.

7. That the Synod notes with satisfaction es. 24 (a) of the Lambeth Conference of 958.

(24. (a) The Conference wholeheartedly esires that the Plan for reunion in North dia and Pakistan may go forward, and that e intention of the Plan may be secured, at the ministry of the united Church shall e 'fully accredited in the eyes of all its embers, and so far as may be of the Church roughout the world '.")

8. In considering Res. 24 (b) of the Lambeth Conference of 1958, the Synod notes at the Committee on Church Unity and e Church Universal in its Report on p. 2.37 the bottom, makes two general comments :

(a) In the first it urges the desirability of e specific office or order of Ministry eing named in the Prayer as well as the ormula used at the Service of the Unification of the Ministry. It further notes that in e Report of the Committee on Progress in e Anglican Communion –3B on p. 2. 87 to . 90– arguments are adduced from primitive turgical practice in favour of this advice, lthough it is recognised that it has not been llowed in the Anglican Ordinal. The ynod agrees that if this is to be done, the resent procedure in the Representative Act, here the Prayer is being used once for both ishops and presbyters will need to be modied.

(b) In the second the Committee urges at the suitable order of phrases whether in rayer or Formulae be consistently first, eference to the Church of God, and second, eference to the particular Church of N. I./P., nd agrees that such consistency in the matter f order would be a clarification. This only equires amendment in the case of the Prayer n p. 54 of the Plan.

The Synod accordingly requests the Convener of the Negotiating Committee to ummon a meeting of that Committee to consider such modification of the procedure for the Unification of the Ministry. It further instructs the delegates of the C. I. P. B. C. to press for such a re-ordering of the procedure as to procure the following :–

1. The Unification of the Episcopate and the Unification of the Presbyterate in separate stages with a Prayer and a formula at the laying on of hands which shall name the office or order of the Ministry concerned.
2. That representative Presbyters of the non-episcopal Churches now united shall join in the laying on of hands on the Bishops.
3. That a Bishop shall read the Prayer and be one of the representatives of the Churches now united who lay hands both on the three Presbyters, and, with them, on the other Presbyters.
4. That the order of phrases in the Prayer as well as in the Formulae be as recommended at the top of p. 2. 38 of the Lambeth Report.

Note: A way in which these amendments can be secured will be found in Appendix I.

9. In consideration of the attention given to the idea of 'episcope' ("oversight directed to the fulfilling of God's will") in the "Report on Relations between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches", and to the exposition of the same idea in the Lambeth Report, pages 2.88 and 2.89, the Episcopal Synod further urges upon the delegates that they commend to the Negotiating Committee the replacing of the phrase 'episcopal authority and functions' in Section 12 on p. 56 of the Plan, by the term 'episcope', as expressing more truly what the Plan intends and being free from controversial associations.

10. In commending the proposed modifications in the Inaugural Service the Synod endorses the last paragraph of p. 2.32 of the Lambeth Report, which is as follows :

"It is clearly stated that the intention of the rite is that all may receive through all, whatever each has to contribute and whatever each may need of the fullness of Christ's

grace, commission, and authority for the performance of his proper office in the Church Universal within the Churches of North India, of Pakistan, or of Ceylon. From the Anglican point of view, therefore, the rite is intended to convey everything of value in the Anglican ministry, including the tradition of episcopal ordination. Whilst there is no judgement passed on the reality and effectiveness of the various ministries, God is asked to supply whatever each may need. It appears that every minister taking part in such a Unification can humbly submit himself and the sufficiency of all that God has already given him in ordination in his own Church to the judgement of God, and accept from God whatever of grace, commission, and authority he may need. " We may surely trust that God will answer the prayers of his people and provide for the resultant Churches a ministry possessed of all the richness of inheritance which the uniting Churches previously treasured in separation. "

11 (a) The Synod notes the criticism of the Committee on Church Unity and th Church Universal on p. 2.33 of the use o the word ' member ' in Section III. 3 of th Plan. The Synod requests the Negotiatin Committee to refer suitable amendments c the lines of Appendix II, to the Inaugur Committee in accordance with the procedu in Part II, I.2 of the Plan.

(b) The Synod further notes the reque on p. 2.35 of the Report of the Committe that a clause be included in the Plan, as the Ceylon Scheme, making clear that ' minister who for any reason has ceased exercise his ministry shall not be reordain on beginning again to exercise that ministry and requests the Negotiating Committee refer this also to the Inaugural Committee.

12. The Synod records that in so doing is limiting its request for direct action by t Negotiating Committee to the procedure f the Inauguration of the Union in Part II the Plan, and not asking for any change the Constitution as a condition of acceptan of Part I.

(b) A Non-Anglican Comment

First of all, in view of the fact that the Plan of Union in its third edition was submitted to the Negotiating Churches, not for amendment, but for decision, it is clearly a serious matter if proposals for amendment actually are made by any negotiating body. If these are entertained, it will not be easy to justify refusal to reconsider other aspects of the Plan on which others might wish the issues to be reopened. Since in fact various bodies are now actively considering the Plan as it stands and some have indeed already given their verdict on it, it will be necessary for some responsible body to decide whether or not the matter can be presented for further debate at this stage. It is for this reason that a meeting of the small Working Committee of seven, consisting of the conveners of the delegations, has been called and will have been held in Allahabad before this issue appears in print.

In the second place, it would seem to be necessary to emphasise the fact that the dominating and only determining aim of those concerned for the Plan of Union is that a means should be found whereby the barriers dividing bodies of Christian people should be removed. *What we want with one another is visible unity.* It is this relationship which matters, not the acquisition of certain featu of Church organisation or administrati We fully understand and believe that, in relationship of unity, we shall also gain a n experience of certain features of Chu polity (for example Episcopacy, the value Councils, the importance of the local chur to which at present some of us are strange But, *it is not for the sake of gaining these t we are uniting*, and so, to be specific, it is in order to secure the " tradition of episco ordination " that non-episcopal churches s union with the episcopal Church. *It is t they who are brethren in Christ, who are alre fellow members of the body of Christ, may longer be divided from one another.*

Consequently, in the third place, rememb ing the avowed aim of union by co prehension, we have to face a double quest with regard to any request to alter present proposals :

(1) Is it true that in its present fo the Plan *rules out* some aspect of chu manship which, to certain churches, i matter of conscientious conviction ? In instance, does the Plan rule out the interpre ion of episcopacy which the CIPBC finds be essential ? If it does, then, on the basi the Plan, it must be reconsidered. But i

loes not, then the question of a change does ot arise, for it has never been suggested that thers are bound by that interpretation.

(ii) Is it possible to alter the existing roposals for the unification of the ministry, n such a way as to have distinct and separate cts first for bishops and then for all others nstead of the present step 3, in which all like participate) and yet *not rule out* the nterpretation of the ministry which is held in on-episcopal churches? If it is possible, hen conceivably an amendment might be considered, but if it is not possible then clearly such an amendment must be ruled out.

It is to be remembered that the negotiators who met at Pachmarhi, and who approved the Plan in its present form, were of the opinion that the proposals satisfied both requirements. There are certainly many who are yet to be persuaded that it would be possible to accept the changes proposed by the Anglicans and yet equally clearly leave full room for *both* of the differing convictions.

W. S.

(c) The Lambeth Conference and Church Union.

THE RT. REVD. LAURENCE WOOLMER, BISHOP OF LAHORE

At the Lambeth Conference, I found myself ulled in two directions over the requests for odifications in the rite of the unification of he Ministries in the Plan of Church Union in lorth India and Pakistan. On the one hand, was happy that there was an attempt to reove ambiguity in the rite of unification.)n the other hand, I had doubts in my mind s to whether the non-Anglicans would accept he clarification of Anglican intention, and eared a break-down in the negotiations for nion. For many years I had not been happy bout the N. India/Pakistan Plan, because here has appeared to me to be some lack of arity on the Anglican side. It seemed to he that the Anglicans had been cautiously ying to construct a service of unification hich could be interpreted as an ordination y those of their number who did not share he majority belief that the non-episcopally rdained ministers are already Bishops, or resbyters in the Church of God. Now, the ambeth Conference has tried to remove mbiguity to some extent and remedy lack f clarity by stating clearly that the rite of nification is intended to convey everything f value in the Anglican ministry, including, he tradition of episcopal ordination. (Page 32 of the Report).

To what extent has the ambiguity really een removed? Dr. E. L. Mascall in his ther unkind pamphlet "Lambeth 1958 and hristian Unity", asserts that the ambiguity emains. Referring to the words 'the tradi- on of episcopal ordination', he writes that like many other words in the Report the ord 'tradition' has both a theological and popular use, and it is not clear which sense is intended to bear here, and what in any case its force is. 'Including episcopal ordination' would have been quite clear".

Although I do not like Dr. Mascall's pamphlet, I cannot help respecting his intellectual integrity, and agree with him that the word 'tradition' was deliberately chosen by the drafting committee as being ambiguous. If Lambeth had been perfectly clear, in the way Dr. Mascall desired, and used the words 'including episcopal ordination', then non-Anglicans would have surely rejected the Plan of Union without hesitation. If, on the other hand, Lambeth had been clear in the other direction and excluded the possible interpretation of the proposed rite of unification as an ordination, then the Lambeth Conference itself would have been hopelessly divided. Therefore, Lambeth decided to remove ambiguity to this extent only that the interpretation of the rite as an ordination is now plainly permissible, though not, I believe, required. As an eminent Christian leader has well said:

"We all agree that no ordination already conferred can be re-conferred. There is no re-ordination. The Plan is designed not to create fresh scruples (by denying the reality of existing ordained ministries), but to remove existing scruples (such as those held by Anglicans), that all ministers within the United Church may start on an equal footing of ministerial grace, authority and character.

Only God knows what defect in any ministry needs to be made good so that all may be equally catholic. The Plan designs the Services of Unification in such a way that all with equal sincerity can pray to God to increase what is and to confer what is not; and

further designs them in such a way that Anglicans can be satisfied that the requisite features (prayer and episcopal laying on of hands) are present through which Anglicans believe that the character of ordination is conferred by God.

There is no ambiguity in this. It is an open recognition that each is free to interpret as he must, and all can be sure that God, in answer to prayer and laying on of hands, gives all things needful for a Catholic Ministry. The Lambeth Conference has asked for modifications which can remove ambiguity from the services of unification."

I must confess that at the Conference itself I abstained from voting on the modifications recommended concerning the service for the unification of the ministry. I had no strong theological objection but was not happy at such a late stage for further clarification in the rite of unification which, though desirable in clearing up a certain confusion, could easily lead to misunderstanding. I felt that the non-Anglicans might well decide to reject the modifications requested, thus imperilling the whole movement for re-union in N. India and Pakistan. At the same time, I was conscious of the fact that the Lambeth Conference was engaged in answering the question posed by the C. I. P. B. C., asking for assurance that, if the Plan of Union is carried into effect, it may be expected that the Churches of the Anglican Communion will be in full communion from the start with the resulting Churches in India and Pakistan. Obviously, Lambeth would not give the assurance requested if a strong minority in the Conference were dissatisfied with the rite of unification as set out in the Plan of Union. I was thus placed in an unhappy position and felt it right to abstain from voting.

As a member of the Episcopal Synod of the C. I. P. B. C. I joined at Allahabad last month in asking for a further meeting of the Negotiating Committee to consider the suggested Lambeth modifications in the rite of unification, and in endorsing the interpretation of this rite as set out on page 2.32 of the Report. I have had to ask myself the question whether, if the Roman Catholics were willing to reform their Church in accordance with Scripture and agree with us on a Constitution for a united Church, I should be prepared to submit myself to a rite of unification which was intended to convey everything of value in the Roman Catholi ministry, including the tradition of Roma Catholic episcopal ordination. I find mysel able to answer in the affirmative. Though believe I am already myself a Bishop of th Catholic Church, if many of my Roma Catholic brethren could not share this belie because of what seems to them a failure i intention at the time of the consecration c the Bishops in England during the Englis Reformation in the sixteenth century, then should be prepared to submit myself to a rit of unification which would, in acceptabl way, remove existing scruples held by m Roman Catholic brethren. In this sub mission, I should not be denying the realit of my own previous ordination or consecra tion, nor sacrificing any scriptural principle I should be accepting a new commissio from Christ and an extension of authorit within the Church of God granted at a tim of the laying on of hands with prayer, i accordance with scriptural precedent.

There remains the question of the mutua acknowledgment (in the Plan of Union, pag 55) by the uniting churches of each other ministries as ministries of Christ in Hi Word and Sacraments. No doubt, the grea majority of Anglicans will gladly share i this acknowledgment, but we must face th fact that there will be some who will hav reservations, even as was the case at Lambeth 1948, in regard to the Ministry of th Church of S. India. It is my hope that thos within the C. I. P. B. C. who cannot join i the mutual acknowledgment of the ministrie will be able to rest content with the know ledge that in the united Church all ordina tions will be episcopal, and that during th interim period (see Page 50/1 in the Plan there is an undertaking that due consideratio will be given to the traditions and conscien tious feelings of its members.

In my own mind, I could happily accep either the way of re-union taken by th Church in S. India or the proposed way i N. India and Pakistan, with or without th modifications in the rite of unification sug gested by Lambeth, 1958, though I realis that if the former way were followed in N India and Pakistan, there would not be fu communion at first with the various Churche and Provinces of the Anglican Communion If, however, the non-Anglican brethren ca accept the latter way, including the modifica

tions suggested by Lambeth, then it seems that the re-union movement will be greatly encouraged and strengthened, and may make rapid advance in this day and generation. If, on the other hand, the Lambeth modifications do not win acceptance, I shall be sorry, but still believe that the door will not be closed to re-union in N. India and Pakistan, though the way for Anglicans is likely to be more difficult and costly.

Conference on Church Union in North India*

Christian Retreat and Study Centre, Rajpur, Dehra Dun
September 30—October 3, 1958.

IN consultation with the Secretary of the Negotiating Committee (the Venerable Archdeacon T. D. Sully) the Christian Retreat and Study Centre convened on September 30—October 3, 1958, a conference of pastors and laymen representing six of the seven negotiating bodies for study of the Plan and, in particular, with the aim of preparing those attending the conference to present the Plan effectively to their own and other congregations. The names of those participating in the conference appear at the end of this report.

Worship services, Bible study and periods of intercession were central in the conference. It was not the aim to produce a set of findings or recommendations: what was attempted was to have the participants gain an understanding of the chief features of the Plan and of what Union will mean locally, regionally and throughout North India.

Attention was called to the fact that from the beginning of the negotiations there was substantial agreement on doctrines concerning God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin and salvation. The differences have been mainly concerning Church government, the ministry, and baptism, and it was largely to these matters that the negotiators have had to address themselves through the past twenty-nine years. That the Plan is not in every respect satisfactory to all was evident in the discussions during the conference. Expression was given to fears and difficulties, but *no member of the conference thought that the Plan should be abandoned or that Union could not be achieved on the basis of it.* The conference came to agree with the statement in the Preface to the Plan that it was wise that "efforts have been made to avoid over-elaboration of detail, and to leave a great deal to be worked out after the inauguration of Union and during the process of 'growing together'" (Plan, p. vii). When we are all part of the Church of North India, we can deal more effectively with thus far unresolved difficulties than is possible in our separation.

It became clear in the course of study and discussion that the reaction of many to the Plan is determined largely by non-theological considerations. Our emotional attachment to what is familiar and dear tends to make us want to preserve it and to be unwilling to take into account what is equally familiar and dear to those of other traditions. Also, it was stated by two members that the attitude of many in their denominations to Union was almost entirely determined by social and economic considerations—the effect, good or bad, Union would have on their salary, status and security—rather than by convictions concerning the merits or defects of the Plan. It may prove to be more difficult to deal with such non-theological factors than with theological factors.

Archdeacon Sully addressed the conference on "Theological Bases of Church Unity"†. Rev. R. W. Taylor, Officiating Director of the Study Centre, led Bible Study on "Biblical Bases for Union". The passages studied were: John 10 : 11–16; John 15 : 1–8; John 17 : 6–26; Ephesians 4 : 1–16; Galatians 2 : 11–21.

There were presentations of the following aspects of the Plan, and each presentation was followed by discussion:

* From the official report which was issued.

† Printed in *Church Union—News and Views*, Nov. 1958—Ed.

1. The Episcopate, presented by Dr. E. Ahmad Shah
2. Dioceses and Bishops, presented by Rev. T. Tewari.
3. Unification of the Ministry, presented by Dr. E. Ahmad Shah,
4. Baptism, presented by Mr. P. A. Adhikari.

There were also presentations of the following more general aspects of Union, and each presentation was followed by discussion:

1. Theological Bases for Church Unity, presented by Archdeacon T. D. Sully.
2. Practical Reasons for Church Union, presented by Rev. P. S. Bhonsle.
3. What if there are Dissidents? presented by Dr. Kenneth Yohan Masih.
4. The Formal Position of the Plan, presented by Archdeacon T. D. Sully.
5. Mission and Overseas Aid, presented by Dr. C. H. Hazlett.
6. Property, presented by Dr. C. H. Hazlett.

It is not feasible to include in this report a full account of presentations and discussions. All that is attempted is to call attention to points of special difficulty for one or other of the negotiating groups:

1. **The Episcopate.** Episcopacy in the Church of North India is to be 'both constitutional and historic' (Plan, IX B (5), p. 12), and the fact that Bishops 'shall perform their functions in accordance with the constitution of the Church' (and thus not have autonomous and unlimited authority) should remove fears that have been expressed by those of non-episcopal traditions. And in accepting the 'historic episcopate' the Plan says that "The Church is not committed thereby to any one particular theological interpretation of episcopacy, nor does it demand the acceptance of such an interpretation from its ministers or members (IX B (5) (c)., p. 12).

2. **The Unification of the Ministry.** The Church of South India did not at its inauguration unify its ministry; the North India Plan provides for unification of the ministry at the inauguration of Union. (Plan, Part II, VII D, p. 55). The conference noted the distinction between the 'bringing together' (Plan, pp. 52–54) of the Church of India and Methodist Church in Southern Asia episcopates and 'the representative act of unification of the ministry'. In the steps to be taken at the inauguration of Union, step no. 2 is the bringing together of the episcopates and step no. 3 is the representative act of unification of the ministry (p. 51). In an earlier stage of negotiation step no. 1 was to be the unification of the ministry and step no. 2 was to be the bringing together of the episcopates, and some members of the conference considered this earlier proposal the right one and regretted the change of order in the Plan as it now is. Their view is that making step no. 1 the bringing together of the episcopates can be understood to be making bishops a separate order of the ministry, whereas they want to have only one order of the ministry, with bishops appointed to special functions, but not otherwise differentiated from other ministers. Actually the plan seems neutral on this point.

3. **Dioceses and Bishops.** The Plan states (X 2A3, p. 18) that "the organization of the Church is on a territorial basis. The unit of such territorial organization is the diocese. Each diocese is under the charge of a bishop and functions through a Diocesan Council. Every diocesan bishop is the bishop of a defined territory." The Plan contains a "Tentative Schedule of the First Dioceses", twenty-six in India and five in Pakistan (Plan, pp. 61–64). Members felt that some of the proposed dioceses are so large that their bishops will not be able to exercise effectively the 'pastoral oversight' envisaged in IX B 6 (pp. 12–13) of the Plan, and they hoped that more workable diocesan areas would be demarcated.

However, it was recognized that financial considerations might necessitate reduction, not increase, in the number of dioceses. Few members of the conference had access to the minutes of the meeting of the Negotiating Committee held in Pachmarhi on April 3–6, 1957, so had no knowledge of the financial implications of the Plan. The minutes of the Pachmarhi meeting give an estimate (pp. 24–25) of Rs. 700,000 annually for bishops' salaries, offices, travel and allowances (on the basis of a salary of Rs. 400-600 for a bishop who is married and of Rs. 300-500 for a bishop who is unmarried). This at first sight appears to be an impossibly large amount, but is probably not more than the total the seven uniting groups are devoting to administration. The uniting groups are asked to make available to the Church of India/Pakistan all of the funds they are at present devoting to administration.

4. **Baptism.** Some of the negotiating denominations have held to and practised only 'believer's baptism' (that is, baptism only of those who are capable of making, and do make, a profession of faith in Christ) and find it very hard to accept the practice of infant

baptism. It is important that others recognize how important Baptists and Disciples, for example, consider this matter and how concerned they are that they should not be required to go against their consciences. Non-Baptists felt that refusal on the part of Baptists to recognize the validity for others of the practice of infant baptism would mean in practice that ex-Baptists would not be really a part of the Church of North India/Pakistan. The Baptists hold that it is a matter of conscience with them and that they must not be expected to do violence to their conscientious views.

Another point at which those who hold to believer's baptism expressed great anxiety is the possibility that an adult who has been baptized as an infant may come to the conviction that he must be baptized on the basis of his own, not his parents', professed faith, and that seems to be impossible under the Plan, which states that "the Church holds that there is but one baptism which is therefore unrepeatable in the life of any one person, no matter by which practice it was administered" (Appendix B, No. 4, p. 42). However, No. 7 of "Guiding Principles" reads, "It is further understood that, if a person should persistently maintain that only his baptism now as a believer will satisfy his conscience, although he was baptized in infancy, the minister concerned will refer the matter to the Bishop of the Diocese for pastoral advice and direction", and that principle would seem to have little meaning unless it were possible for the Bishop to advise re-baptism, yet to do so would go directly contrary to principle No. 2 quoted above. The meaning of principle No. 7 needs clarification. If it means that, if the Bishop is convinced that "only his baptism now as a believer will satisfy his conscience", the Bishop then can and should advise re-baptism, that would go a long way towards removing Baptist anxiety.

The Plan states, "Both Infant Baptism and Believer's Baptism shall be accepted as alternative practices in the Church of North India/Pakistan' (Plan VI A 4, p. 6), and the "Guiding Principles in regard to the Alternative Practices of Infant Baptism and Believer's Baptism" include a paragraph which express awareness of the problem involved.*

5. **The recommendations of the 1958 Lambeth Conference.** Although the Negotiating Committee at its meeting on April 3–6, 1957 "resolved that the Plan of Church Union, as amended, be approved for presentation to the governing bodies of the negotiating Churches in India, Pakistan and elsewhere *for their decision*" that is, for a 'yes' or 'no' vote of each negotiating body, the Lambeth Conference recommended to the Church of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon that further changes in the Plan be proposed, if the Church of North India is to be assured of initial full communion with Lambeth and with all of the several branches of world Christendom which this implies. The changes suggested are likely to be acceptable to the negotiating bodies. *What is cause for consternation is that the recommendations of Lambeth Conference may lead to further delay in the final vote on, and achievement of, union. However, the Secretary of the Negotiating Committee, himself a member of the Church of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon, held out hope that a way may be found to avoid further delay in voting on the Plan.

6. **Continuing questions concerning the Plan.** One session of the conference was devoted to hearing what are considered from denominational points of view to be difficulties or inadequacies in the Plan. Three of those presented, and the replies given, are :

(a) There is no provision for the office of elder which is an important feature of churches stemming from the Presbyterian tradition. *Reply*: The Plan emphasizes the fact under the heading "The Priesthood of All Believers" that "the Church is a 'royal priesthood' of believers, all its members have direct access to God, and all the members have their share in the commission and authority of the whole Church" (VII 1, p. 8) and Section VIII, 'The Ministry of the Church: the Laity' sets out in considerable detail the opportunities and responsibilities of the laity.

(b) There is little recognition of the place of women in the life of the Church. *Reply*: The term 'laity' includes both men and women, lay men and lay women. All work and offices of the Church are as open to

* Quoted elsewhere in this issue: See article on "The Plan of Union and Baptism"—*Ed.*

*Until official reaction is known, it is impossible to anticipate what it will be—Ed.

women as to men, except the ordained ministry. The first paragraph on 'The Laity' in the Plan contains the following sentence: "Within this ministry the Church recognizes and welcomes a rich diversity of gifts both to men and to women, for the exercise of which it will seek to provide," and in the section on 'The Laity' the expression 'men and women' is used of "those who are appointed to share in the responsibilities" (VIII 5, p. 10).

(c) The 'laying on of hands' in the unification of the ministry is really re-ordination. *Reply*: The negotiators—responsible, honest, dedicated persons—have again and again unanimously said 'the laying on of hands' in the unification of the ministry is *not* re-ordination, and the Plan specifically affirms that is not. Numbers 13 and 14 declaring 'The Intention' of 'The Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry' contain the following statements: ".....it is not re-ordination; nor is it presumed to bestow again the grace, gifts, character or authority that have already been bestowed upon them (ministers). The laying on of hands is adopted as a scriptural and traditional symbol of the bestowing of spiritual gifts by God; and the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fulness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India/Pakistan" (Plan, p. 56).

7. **Practical Steps for Those who attended the Conference.**

Since the basic purpose of the Conference was to prepare the participants to lead further informed discussions on the Plan in their own churches and denominations and also in other churches and councils near their home places, it is hoped that wide use will be made of them. Congregations or other groups wanting their help and services in this connection may write directly to the participants or to the Director, Christian Retreat and Study Centre, Rajpur P. O., Dehra Dun, U. P., for help in making such arrangements.

A discussion of Church Union may have to be longer than we ordinarily tend to think. With adequately informed leadership perhaps one day is the minimum period needed and no doubt a week-end devoted to the discussion would be more fruitful. The conference noted that while it is good to have several of the negotiating denominations represented in such discussions it must nevertheless be pointed out that picking an Anglican, or Methodist, or Presbyterian to participate in leading the discussions just because it seems a good idea to have an Anglican, or Presbyterian participating can be rather damaging to intelligent discussion. Leaders should be selected primarily for their knowledge of the Plan and the negotiations leading up to it. Often a Presbyterian or a Methodist can better tell a group of all the things that the Anglicans or Baptists are willing to give up in order to realize Church Union than an Anglican or a Baptist could do.

The Plan in Various Languages

Copies of the *Plan* in the major languages of the area are available as follows:

i. *Bengali*: From the Christian Tract Society Book Shop, 44A Lower Circular Road, Calcutta, 16: price 37 nP.

ii. *Gujerati*: Gujerati United School of Theology, Ellis Bridge, Ahmedabad, B. S. price 31 nP.

iii. *Hindi*: From the North India Christian Tract & Book Society, 18 Clive Road, Allahabad: price 31 nP.

iv. *Marathi*: From the Christian Book Shop, 84 Sankli Street, Byculla, Bombay: price 35 nP.

v. *Urdu*: (Indian Edition) from the Masha'l Printing Press, Kharar, Dist. Ambala: price 31 nP.

(Pakistani Edition) from the Punjab Religious Book Society, Lahore: price 4 as (Constitution) and 2 as (Inauguration).

vi. *Oriya*: Summary available from the Mission Press, Cuttack, Orissa.

Among other study literature available, we commend a leaflet containing "*Some Questions for Group Discussion*", (price 6 nP.) available from:

The Administrative Secretary, S. C. M. House, 2 Mission Road, Bangalore.

Intended primarily for the use of student groups, these questions are carefully framed to direct any groups of interested people to a full understanding of the Plan.

Some Baptismal Problems

IN view of the importance of issues raised at the Youth Faith and Order Consultation on Baptism and Confirmation at Hilversum, Holland, which I was privileged to attend, it has been suggested that I should select some questions there raised for discussion.

During the week, twelve questions were selected, and on the final day three groups were formed and were given four questions each. Each group presented a written statement in reply to each question.

These statements have been circulated to every participant in the Consultation. It should be remembered that the purpose of our gathering was not purely theological, but rather to consider the place of baptism and confirmation with regard to the integration of young people into the life of the Church. As I now read these questions and answers, the problems tend to settle round four main issues. The comments which follow are therefore intended for ministerial thought rather than rational conclusions for public consumption.

I. Is Baptism Necessary ?

Judging by the answers given, this subject came up, explicitly or implicitly, in more than one place. The Salvation Army representative expressed the view that there was actually no necessity for the material sign in baptism, but that faith in God's promise and conversion could be substituted for the sacrament. This obviously was not acceptable to others, and it therefore raised the whole question of the relation of Christ's baptism and incarnation to the sacrament of baptism. Some interpreted this simply as an image or symbol, whilst others were inclined to think of it as actually conveying in a very real sense the benefits of Christ's baptism in its administration.

For both these approaches there is apparently a practical difficulty. One group was asked to consider how we can speak to people who are intellectually puzzled about baptism and who could not see that baptism could add anything to their relationship with God. All the members admitted that this problem is found more obviously in churches where baptism is not administered to children, but they also agreed that it would prevail even among the paedobaptists if baptism were to be intellectually considered. Beyond this, the group found no satisfactory answer. They simply pointed out that the answer varies according to whether it is believed that baptism is the effectual means of participating in what Christ has done, or whether it is the seal of membership in the body of Christ which is effected by repentance and faith, and they urged that the churches should consider the precise value and effects of baptism, and its relation to faith. The question remained. How can you convince a person intellectually puzzled about baptism that he ought to be baptized ? And does it make any real difference to him if he is not ?

Whilst some were wrestling with these practical issues, others were engaged in studying the relationship between Word and Sacrament. Here, somewhat surprisingly, it was agreed that both Word and Sacrament effect the same (i.e. forgiveness of sins), and both may justly be called 'means of grace'. This prompted the further question: 'If grace is given alike in Word and Sacrament, is it possible to speak of initiation otherwise than by sacraments ? '

A third group would no doubt say baptism, though beneficial, is not necessary; that it is a symbol and seal of something which has already happened; and that it adds nothing which is not possible through the Word. Yet there is an increasing feeling, especially among ministers, that baptism should be administered to all Christians as an act of initiation and in consultation with other branches of the Church we tend to assume for believers' baptism as large and as important a place as they do for infant baptism. Has the time come, then, when we ought to prevent ourselves from being swept along by a flood-tide, and first consider whether baptism is as vital and necessary as many other parts of the Church would have us believe ? If it is, ought not both sides to be able to give reasons more easily than apparently is the case ?

II. Is There Really any Difference Between Infant Baptism Followed by Confirmation and Infant Dedication Followed by Believers' Baptism ?

One group was asked to consider the place of kerygma and the response to kerygma by

decision in baptism and confirmation. Its members represented three main positions:

(*a*) Where parents and sponsors respond on behalf of the child in baptism, who later re-affirms his baptismal vows in confirmation.

(*b*) Where the parents promise the Christian education of the child, who later makes his own confession of faith.

(*c*) Where the response of faith is present in the parents and the members of the congregation.

The question appended to their statement by this group is very telling: 'What is the significance of the fact that in all churches represented there exists some initiation rite for infants as well as some confirmatory rite for grown-up children in which they consciously affirm what they believe?,

On the surface it would appear as if basically we are all doing the same things but calling them by different names—all except the Orthodox Church. They do not have any place for the idea of a ceremony connected with personal decision, and it was largely on their account that a challenging question was added by another group to one of their answers: 'Do the churches not having a rite sealing personal decision feel that one would serve any purpose?'

The wording of that question is significant. The practical issues here were to the fore. And it is very difficult to convince paedobaptists that the main point is not whether such a rite is useful but whether it is Biblical. Some of them had already hinted that confirmation was not Biblical, and did not apparently think of believers' baptism as in any way different. Were they right in this? And are we right to think that infant baptism is nothing more than our service of dedication? Some thought that at this point we were all closer together than at any other time.

III. What is the Place of Children in the Church?

To some, children cannot be members of the Church because membership implies baptism, and baptism implies a responsible decision. To others, membership is possible for children through the baptism of their parents, which is effective for them until they reach the time when they are able to make a decision for themselves. Beyond these two points, agreement did not seem possible, except to say that the issues turned on one's conception of the Church. It is obviously against the conviction of many people to argue, and indeed we do, that children nurtured in Christian homes and Church have no standing in the Church. At the same time, it offends those upholders of reponsible membership to admit that infants, because baptized, are part of the Church. This is at any rate a matter where the paedobaptist is fairly clear what he believes. Those of us who stand for a converted membership need to give serious thought to the place of children in the Church. It is a question that is not relevant only here: it is relevant also in discussions on Church union in such places as North India and Pakistan.

IV. Is Baptism Really Related to Integration?

Most members of one group were agreed that obligatory confirmation was not to be commended, whilst another group devoted one whole statement to this subject.

In the case of churches practising infant baptism, it was urged that confirmation classes should be more differentiated as to age and general background (religious, social and educational), and that young people should be helped to appreciate what had been done for them in baptism, the ceremony being interpreted in the context of the whole teaching of the Church. But this teaching must not be purely doctrinal. Young people must be helped to see what baptism means in daily living; that it imposes upon them an obligation to lead a life of love such as Christ Himself led, so that they see themselves as sharing, not only in the baptism of Christ, but also in the whole of His life. This, in turn, imposes upon the Church an obligation of pastoral care: 'to know what they (i.e. candidates for baptism) are actually saying and asking about their baptism and not only what they ought to ask'. This ministry of listening has often been neglected by the Church, and could be considerably improved if laymen could in some way assist in baptismal education.

It is admitted that churches that practise believers' baptism have a somewhat better approach on this line, but it is still true that a good many of the suggestions made regarding paedobaptists could be considered and applied to our churches with profit.

These and other baptismal issues are going to be before us for a long time. The day has gone when we could rest content because Barth and Brunner saw some good in believers' baptism. Since then, both sides have re-investigated their position and endeavoured to strengthen it, so that the only thing which is really certain is that these issues will not be simply settled, one way or the other.

The interest in Church union among the younger churches only serves to complicate the matter and to make the clarification of our position still more vital. The closer we get to each other in the W. C. C., when discussing matters of Faith and Order, the more cautious everybody feels he ought to be. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should be able to state a case for believers' baptism, and to ensure that Baptists speak on this subject with a common mind—a fact by no means certain at the moment.

The Youth Section of the W. C. C. is now considering these problems, from the point of view of Faith and Order, and also of Life and Work. This Consultation at Hilversum was really a preparation for a European Youth Conference at Lausanne in 1959. Before delegates go to that meeting, it would be a good thing if these matters could have been debated in our churches and in our fraternals, so that Lausanne might learn the real mind of British Baptists, and not just the opinions of the representatives.

A. Gilmore.

The Plan of Union and Baptism

Rev. William Stewart

THE articles on Baptism which have recently appeared in this journal have shown how bold a thing it is to propose corporate Union between Churches which differ in their teaching and practice on such an important matter. We shall enter such a union well aware that hard problems are likely to arise.

Yet this fact is frankly recognised in the *Plan of Union* itself, the very essence of which is that it proposes that we should unite without waiting for prior agreement on the various matters about which Christians, in their separation, have been divided. This approach is based on the conviction that these differences ought not to outweigh our far more important unity, the unity which we are given "in Christ" and which we ought not to deny by division. It is further based on the conviction that we are more likely to find the solution of the problems on which we are divided if we face them together, in that unity, than if we strive to persuade one another from outside. The unfortunate truth is that such persuasion is found to quicken suspicions and even to revive resentments, and to press for a precise answer to all our problems, prior to union, may be to awaken fears among those who see their own cherished position threatened.

It is for this reason that the Negotiating Committee has not sought to settle the debate between those who practise and those who do not practise infant Baptism, but has frankly stated the two practices as "alternatives", either of which will be fully respected within the united Church. The solution of individual questions which may arise as a result of this recognition is left to the pastoral wisdom of the ministers of the Church after union. It is perhaps not out of place to quote the paragraph in Appendix B of the Plan which most clearly acknowledges what such a proposal entails:

> The Church of North India/Pakistan is keenly aware of the fact that divergence of conviction on this matter is something which can only be borne within one fellowship by the exercise of much mutual forbearance and charity. Nevertheless it believes that it is called to make this act of faith in the conviction that it is not the will of the Lord of the Church that they who are one in their faith in Him should be divided even for such a cause as this. It further believes itself to be called to this venture in the confidence that in brotherly converse within one Church, those of diverse convictions will be led together in the unity of the Spirit to learn what is His will in this as in other matters of difference.

The principal discussion which has emerged concerns the provision to meet the difficulty of a person baptised in infancy who later believes that he ought to be baptised as a believer. There are certain considerations which would seem to be relevant:

The Evangelistic Challenge

1. It has been stated that in England this change of conviction is fairly common and also that a fair proportion of Baptist missionaries from England have in fact come to embrace the Baptist position after having been baptised in infancy. This may well be true. England is at least a nominally Christian country, and in any evangelistic campaign those who are awakened to the claims of the Gospel are very likely to have been previously at least nominal Christians. If the evangelist whom they have heard is of Baptist convictions he will naturally face them with the challenge of accepting Baptism, and there have always been those who, from their own study, have come to the conclusion that they should seek believer's Baptism. Further, in a country like England, the different denominations are found side by side in every town and many villages, nor is there the same recognition of "comity" as we are familiar with in a mainly non-Christian country. It is therefore not strange if the question of baptising a person already baptised in infancy should fairly frequently arise.

But is this our situation in India and Pakistan? Here all the Churches are in an evangelistic situation in which the Gospel is presented *to the non-Christian world*, and where those who are being received into the Church by Baptism are people who had not previously had any connection with it. This is the common task of the churches, and it is closely akin to the task of the early Church. The Churches which now seek Union with one another are not primarily concerned with the problem of winning those who are already Christian or asking them to change their allegiance, but with presenting the Gospel to those who are without. Not only so, but, under the practice of "comity", when we do meet the problem of a person who wishes to change his denomination, it is normal to encourage him first to try to find the answer to his problem in his own Church. It would be a tragic loss of all sense of proportion if, on the threshold of union, we should now be mainly pre-occupied with the occasional question of a change in conviction among Christians and forget that part of the very summons to union is that we may close our ranks in face of the great challenge of presenting the Gospel to the 98% for our fellow-countrymen who have not yet received it. This consideration does not solve the problem, but it may help us to see it in perspective.

Respect for both Practices

2. What has been urged in the discussion is a plea that those of Baptist convictions should remain free to follow their distinctive practice. In fact this practice is fully stated in the Plan as an alternative which will be respected and followed in the united Church. The actual problem which is being debated concerns rather *the practice of the non-Baptists*, for the very persons about whom the problem will arise, if at all, are people who have belonged to Churches which practise infant Baptism. If it had not been so, they would not have been baptised in infancy. The difficulty is, therefore, that if a provision is to be made which would permit the re-baptism of such persons in later life, it could not but radically affect the baptismal teaching and practice of *these* Churches.

The statement which is incorporoted in the Plan as it stands frankly leaves the decision in questions which may arise after union to the ministers of that united Church. Is there any possibility of doing more than this, without seriously challenging the basis of union itself? The adherents of the Baptist position certainly must not be asked themselves to practise Infant Baptism, but if there is to be union between them and those who sincerely do so, then that practice also must be respected.

The Problem for the Adult

3. It is important to keep in mind the fact that the problem of conscience does not arise only in the case of persons baptised in infancy. It can arise with equal force and distress for a person who was baptised in adult life, but who later doubts whether his faith at the time was sincere. We are all familiar with the teaching of certain sectarian groups who call upon their converts to accept a new baptism regardless of whether they were previously baptised or not. Unhappily there have been people who, under the influence of a succession of such teachers, have sought baptism not twice but several

nes. They too might plead conscience, but ne in the present Negotiations would think right for the Church to accede to their shes in this matter, for they arise from a plorable misunderstanding of the Gospel nich it is the task of the Church to oclaim.

Even more difficult can be the situation of person who sought baptism at the age which customary in his community but without y real conviction in the matter, but who, rhaps ten or more years later, is awakened r the first time to the real meaning of faith. ch a person may then be faced with the al question of whether his Baptism was a al one, for he knows very well that when he is baptised he actually did not have faith. this not a problem just as genuine as that the person who was baptised in infancy, d is not the answer the same in both cases? rely the part of any true minister of the spel would be to lead the person concern- away from the idea that it is by a repeti- on of the rite of Baptism that he will be ved, and rather to the confidence that it is in the mercy of the Saviour, whose love to him and death for his sake was declared in his Baptism, that he has hope. If, at the time of his Baptism, he was himself careless about this or ignorant of it, that does not alter the great objective fact of what Christ has done for him, and of what was expressed in word and action by the minister of the Church who baptised him. His part is now, and not only once but every day of his life, to lay hold in faith upon that great assurance and not to be led astray by some new preacher into thinking that he ought to ask for the Baptism itself to be repeated.

Is there any possible way whereby the Church could write a provision into its constitution which would open the door for a new Baptism for one baptised below a certain age and yet maintain a proper attitude to Baptism for all those who received it (however unthinkingly) after they had reached years of discretion? And, if there is not, is it not possible to go forward with the statements which actually have been incorporated in the Plan which is before us?

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om Another Point of View:

In Northern Ireland a Presbyterian elder, with many years of faithful Church service to s credit, fell ill. The doctor, when called, took a grave view of his condition and warned m that he had but a month or two to live.

As the doctor left, the elder sent for the local Roman Catholic priest and, when he rived, made his submission to Rome and was received.

News of this event reached the Presbyterian minister who hastened to the bedside and pressed his dismay at what had happened:

"How is it possible", he demanded, "that you, an elder of the Church for all these ars, should have become a Roman Catholic and that without even telling me what you were oing?"

"Ah, minister", replied the sick man, "Don't take it that way. You see, these Roman atholics are getting to be so strong that it is very alarming. So, when I knew I hadn't long live, I thought it would be far better that one of them should die than one of us."

CHANGE OF MANAGER

As he will shortly be leaving India, Dr. W. M. Ryburn has laid down his responsibilities as Manager of "News and Views" with effect from January, 1959. The Editor and the Negotiation Committee are deeply grateful to Dr. Ryburn for all that he has done to put this journal on a sound footing during these first years of its existence.

The new Manager is Miss E. L. *Saunders, Masha'l Printing Press, Kharar, District Ambala, Punjab* whom we welcome with gratitude to this post.

Will subscribers, whether in India or in other countries, *kindly correspond directly with Miss Saunders, and not with the Editor,* on all matters concerning subscriptions, advertisements, etc.?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

LAMBETH: ANOTHER WAY ?

Renfrew
22nd Jan., 1959.

The Editor:
Church Union: News and Views

Dear Sir,

With reference to the proposals made by Lambeth, I feel that if the Anglicans pres for the alterations, Dr. Kellock's suggestion does not meet the problem, for it still treats th non-Anglican Presbyterate as though it is on a level with the Anglican one, and did not hav episcopal functions. It seems to me, however, that there is another possible way:

This way would be for the non-Anglican churches to unite first, and consecrate thei new bishops. They would thus be uniting with one another under the present Plan of Unio with simply the bringing together of the episcopates omitted, and therefore without alteratio to the Plan and the need for delay in acceptance. Then on the next day the now unite Church could unite with the Anglicans, uniting its episcopate with the Anglican episcopat and its presbyterate with the Anglican presbyterate in two separate parts of the one step suggested by Dr. Kellock. This would be appropriate as after the first union and the cons cration of the new bishops, the united Church would have separated the exercise of i episcopal functions from the exercise of its presbyteral functions, and its presbyters woul be parallel to the Anglican ones. This would mean that hands would be twice laid on th heads of non-Anglicans, instead of on Anglican and Methodist Bishops, but I don't think the would mind, as it would be also a visible demonstration of the fact that unification of th ministry by this means would not have anything to do with reordination! The order events would then be like this:

Day 1: Union of non-Anglican churches. Unification of their ministry.
Consecration of new Bishops.

Day 2: Union of the new Church and the C. I. P. B. C. Unification of their Ministries
(a) Episcopates (b) Presbyterate
Appointment of the Bishops of the United Church to their dioceses.

Later: Diocesan services of unification (as at present).

Personally I hope that the C. I. P. B. C. will not press the Lambeth point of vie on these alterations, and in that even this suggestion will not be necessary. But in case th do, could it be considered?

Yours sincerely,
William G. Young.

Writers in this Number

The Rev. C.C. Pande, Bankura, West Bengal, is Chairman of the Bengal District of the Methodist Church. He is Convener of the Methodist delegation to the Negotiating Committee and is also Chairman of the Negotiating Committee.

The Right Revd. Laurence Woolmer is the Bishop of Lahore of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon.

Rev. A. Gilmore's article appeared in the "Fraternal", a Baptist ministers' journal published in England. It was reprinted by permission in the "Monthly Newsletter" of the Baptist Missionary Society, Calcutta and is again reproduced here by permission of the Editor.

Rev. William Stewart, a minister of the United Church of Northern India is on the staff of Serampore College. He is Convener of the U. C. N. I. delegation and Editor of this journal.

Rev. W. G. Young, who writes to the Editor, is a missionary of the Church of of Scotland and a minister of the United Church in Pakistan. He is at present on extended furlough in Scotland.

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